

COSMOPOLITAN CHRONICLE

True tales from the annals of history, archaeology, construction, and restoration of the Casa de Bandini and Cosmopolitan Hotel.
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Bathrooms : Part 1

William F. Mennell
District Services Manager
San Diego Coast District

Today, when we think of a bathroom, it has a toilet, a bathtub, and a sink. But 100 years ago, this was not always the case, in fact it was rare, only 14% of homes in 1908 had a bathtub. Although these seemingly simple components have been in one place or another for thousands of years, this combination which almost all of us consider ordinary is a comparatively modern configuration.

When the Casa de Bandini was first completed in 1829, it did not have bathrooms, nor did the Cosmopolitan Hotel in 1870. Bathrooms were not installed in the hotel until 1930, by Juan Bandini's Grandson, Cave J. Coutts, Jr. This is about the same time indoor plumbing started becoming more common in rural homes in the U.S., and only six years after pipe and fitting sizes, finally became standardized in the U.S..

The reasons for the seeming delay of indoor plumbing are many, starting but far from ending with the fixtures.

Bathtubs. The word itself appears to come from Mark Twain, who coined the word bath-tub in an 1869 story *Innocents Abroad*. Before that they were often called bathing tubs, and of course had been around for centuries. In the



time of Juan Bandini they were often made of wood—similar to a large bucket-- or copper, and could have been round or oblong. In 1847, Juan had a bath house built in an effort to have his daughters visit him more often. It was built next to, or over the well, and would have contained only a tub, no sink and certainly not a toilet. The bathing tub would be filled

with a bucket from the well, and hot water added by heating it over a wood fire. The tubs usually had no drain, so had to be emptied by bucket.

By the time of the Cosmopolitan, not much had changed in terms of tub design or how it was filled and used, except in high-priced city homes, where new home designs included what we now think of as a bathroom, although the room was often much smaller than today. Tubs made of tin were common in addition to wood and copper; cast iron tubs were not manufactured in the U.S. until 1883, by the Standard Sanitary Manufacturing Company, and the Kohler Company. There must have been a bath house close to the hotel, as getting to San Diego via stage coach no matter what route, had to have been a very dusty affair.

